

CRITICAL REVIEWS OF THE SEASON'S LATEST BOOKS

Owen Johnson on the Wickedness of Wall Street—Bertha Runkle's Romance of Army Life. New Fiction by Rex Beach, Florence Morse Kingsley, Cora Harris, Louis Joseph Vance and Others. New Stories by Edna Ferber and Marjorie Benton Cooke—Glimpses of France, Italy, Spain, Greece.

It is against the wickedness of Wall Street that Owen Johnson feels called upon to preach in "Making Money" (Frederick A. Stokes Company). His hero has a soul above his father's business. With three classmates he discusses, soon after graduation, their real ambitions: three of them wish for power and aim to obtain money quickly. The hero enters a broker's office, where under the protection of a great speculator he first gains and then loses, bringing disaster on his friends. This reforms him; he takes the approved cure of starting all over again as a laborer in a machine shop. He also arranges his affairs of the heart by transferring his affections from the speculator's worldly daughter to her younger and more impulsive sister. Then there is a panic in which the speculator is ruined through his wife's selfishly refusing to aid him with the money he has settled on her, and the hero decides to enter his father's factory, as he should have done at the start. In spite of the commonplace against the methods of Wall Street and the misdeeds of capitalists, many not very interesting financial operations and various impressionistic descriptions of New York life, the tone and conclusion recall Mr. Wells' "The War of the Worlds." It is a marked falling off from "The Salamander."

The first part of Bertha Runkle's "Straight Down the Crooked Lane" (The Century Company), with the gloom and impulsiveness of the heroine, and her father's jealousy, wholly unwarranted. He subsequently acts like a lunatic, which may fit in with the Philippine setting but is puzzling to readers unaccustomed to army manners. To set matters right the scene is transferred to Japan, where the conduct of the heroine becomes still more incoherent, though the author arbitrarily explains everything. The story is readable and several of the people interesting. It is a pity that instead of developing them and holding the plot together, the author has made room for her impressions of travel.

An amusing idea is worked out entertainingly, wholly apart from the moral it conveys, in Grace Livingston Hill Lutz's "The Obsession of Victoria Green" (J. B. Lippincott Company). A wealthy middle-aged spinster in a quiet Pennsylvania town decides to take into her home her nephew, a pretty rough sixteen-year-old boy brought up in the streets of Chicago. She sees at once that she can do nothing with him unless she enters into his life and that of the companions he makes, who are as full of mischief as reputation in town. So she joins in their amusements and takes up their ways, to the scandal of her inquisitive neighbors, but she reaches the better instincts of the boys and straightens them out. The heroine is charming and her sharp-tongued friend is amusing, but the boys are painful and the situation is not very convincing.

The Mexican muddle is bad enough as it is without being complicated by fiction, and it detracts from the interest of Rex Beach's "Heart of the Sunset" (Harpers). The Mexicans who appear in the tale are our old friends the greasers, but unable to cope with the intelligence and brawn of the public gringo. Chief among them is a comic opera bandit who makes love, murders and robs with equal facility and who is killed at last. The heroine is a decidedly obstinate young woman with a mania for getting into dangerous situations from which she must be rescued, whose domestic life is made unhappy by a husband who deteriorates rapidly. The energetic hero is troubled by the dread of hereditary insanity. In the end everything comes out right with some violence. The author seems to have exaggerated notions about heredity and to find society on the Texas border unattractive.

There is nothing but trouble and unpleasantness in Florence Morse Kingsley's "The Heart of Philana" (Dodd, Mead and Company), which will be regretted by those who have liked the heroine and her friends. Only the level-headed dreamer comes out unscathed and human. Philana, after marriage is troubled by jealousy of her husband's first wife and by a morbid craving for a baby. Why the author does not give her one in the natural way we cannot make out; her depriving her of the one she craves to obtain is wasteful cruelty. When the reader is not occupied with the sordid tragedy of the strange family in the farmhouse he must dread that a simple girl may go wrong and for relief listen to the unusually ill-natured gossip of the village women. Something seems to have soured the author and made her read her handiwork.

An abnormally imaginative and decided little girl makes all her elders do what she wishes in Emily Calvin Blake's "Summertime Stirs the Fire" (A. C. McClurg and Company, Chicago). She has a little sister and brother, who are natural children, a patient and compliant mother and a father as imaginative as herself, who has invented a machine by which he can discover the true bent of any person through the color he emanates. This may be allegory or part of some new cult of the "aura." The child meets

a number of queer persons and leads them to do what is right. The problems attacked are beyond the range of children, so that this tale must be adult fiction. The little girl's talk is bright and the other children are natural and amusing.

More man is pulverized by Cora Harris in "The Co-Citizens" (Doubleday, Page and Company) and woman suffers secured in a Southern county. Energetic measures are, naturally, required for this. An old lady, who is not merely the wealthiest person in the county, but whose wealth consists of mortgages and notes that control the fortunes of nearly every man in the county, leaves all she has to three trustees for the purpose of securing votes for women. They organize the women, terrorize their debtors, buy up the confidential papers in the hands of the local political boss; they have the bank and the county newspaper in their hands, and they carry the election without trouble. The author permits no scruples to stand in the way of her woman politicians and tells many tales of man's inhumanity to woman.

In "Nobody" (George H. Doran Company) Louis Joseph Vance varies the programme of tales of hurried, preposterous adventures by putting a man through them. A tired and desperate shop girl, sleeping on the roof of a New York house, is driven by a succession of natural incidents to take shelter in another house in the same block. Then things begin to happen and within twenty-four hours she is installed as secretary to a rich old lady in a distant country house. Unfortunately the author thinks it necessary to introduce some high-pressure love business there, which

A ROMANTIC CHRONICLE FROM A FAVORITE HAND

How the Anabaptist cobblers of Hag Lane rode out in the dusk of night and powerfully disposed of the troop of long-haired interlopers who had dared to come gallivanting about the neighborhood of Ely, where Col. Oliver Cromwell was even then drilling the formidable material of his model regiment, is related with much liveliness and playfulness of manner, and with a sufficiency of unmistakable antiquarian coloring, by S. R. Crockett in his story of "Hal of the Ironsides" (Fleming H. Revell Company). Hal was only 18 years old, but he led the Hag Lancers as a veteran might have done. Certainly it was valuable assistance that was rendered to him by the slim and pretty maiden who mounted the horse behind him. Hereafter, his large white wings, as he and his good men were passing through the encampment of his camp—a highly picturesque body as he came upon them picketed and disposed for their night's rest.

This attractive maiden knew the whereabouts of the invaders, and showed the way. She was lively and informal in conversation. "Anybody can pull any old bell rope, but I got the sexton's gun and came back as fast as I could run. If I had not he would have popped you. Good luck I came!" She referred to the white wings of the frays; she had been set down from Capt. Hal's horse and directed to run away and ring the church bell at Gendy, but, disbelieving orders, had left the sexton to perform that humble service and had returned with the sexton's gun in time to shoot a man. Wallop, leader of the invaders, as (Wallop) was about to "pop" Capt. Hal with a pistol.

There are times when it is a severe denial not to quote a few words from a story, and we yield in this instance to a lively inclination. It was this way: "Even as the trigger finger of the servant Wallop crooked about the pull, and a man's life hung on the fall of the dog, a loud report startled the horses. Wallop swayed in his saddle and fell prone, while Dick Lacey, smitten on the casque by Hal's sword, lay motionless on the ground, presently he yielded himself prisoner, his wits still wandering, as it seemed, for he stood disarmed, rubbing his steel cap from which the fair ringleader hung to his shoulders, and muttering, 'It was a girl, or the devil in the shape of a girl, she did it.' Hal's surprise was as great as Dick Lacey's. 'Do you know,' said the maiden to Hal, 'I don't believe you have ever looked at me. I am not so very little.' Hal looked at the playful creature; the sexton's gun must have been still smoking in her hand. 'Great God!' he exclaimed, 'tis a woman!' His surprise surprised us. In the frontispiece picture, where this maiden is shown sitting with the young Captain on his great white warhorse,



AM and CN Williamson and "SECRET HISTORY AS REVEALED BY LADY PEGGY O'MALLEY" (Doubleday Page)

changes the character of his heroine and interferes with his plot. The reader is kept puzzled, however, and the confusion continues to the end, which is weakened by a needless lack of conscience on the heroine's part in order that the story may end where it started.

By introducing a moving picture company (B. M. Bower and Company) has made a variation in her usual stories, but hardly an improvement. Her heroine is properly attractive and so is the cowboy lover, so far as he is allowed to appear, and a mystery that must be solved is provided. With the picture people and their troubles, however, funny as they are, all sense of reality is lost, the scene turns into the wild West of the photo plays and attention is distracted from the story the author began to tell.

The adroit use of well worn material by James B. Hendryx makes an exciting tale of "The Son of the Private Spud Tamson" (Appleton). The hero is a product of the Glasgow slums, who is put through the routine of army training in the successive tales, gets into all possible trouble and fights like a hero. The alcoholic and pugilistic sides of army life are exaggerated in these tales and the humor tends to practical jokes, but the tales are interesting.

The energetic saleswoman heroine of Edna Ferber has to be broken to domestic life in "Emma McChesney & Co." (Frederick A. Stokes Company). After the first tale of South America, the delicate slipper exposed at the bottom of the petticoat, the petticoat itself—all are quite obviously feminine. We notice too that Capt. Hal, whose years were 18, appears in this picture as a massive warrior of at least 50, with enough severities in his face to make a poem by William Watson.

The Lady Molly Woodham was another fair maiden very ardently attached to Capt. Hal; she was a hypocrite and a tease; a lively person capable of variety; now stormy, now kittenish; quick in her transitions from laudable to a little silly at times. She must have seemed very formidable to Hal when he found her polishing up her brace of pistols at Danbury Towers. Was she really for King Charles and against Cromwell and the Parliament and Hal? Nay, she was merely an affectionate, a whim, a pretty pose.

The story is full of adventure, of stirring incident. Hal went as a spy to the royal city of Oxford. He pretended to be a physician from Mesopotamia with medicines from the Garden of Eden and married a woman who was quired on the borders of China. He imposed upon King Charles and sold great quantities of medicine to the soldiers of the royal army. His slave boy, Sid, who did juggling tricks that were really the enchanted murder who shot Wallop, the servant trooper, with the sexton's gun at Gendy. Hal's success as a spy was assured when he cured the Princess Lutz's spianel of a malady caused by overfeeding. This beautiful but reprehensible princess, who was so frankly immoral and whose pink toes are described by the romancer with such playful fervor, acquainted Hal readily with all the military plans of the royalists, so that all he had to do after curing the spianel was to ride away to Cromwell and "put wile" that expectant and great commander.

Alas for the shocking fate of the incautious lady who so readily favored Hal with her confidences! But she was terribly avenged. The chapter entitled "The Flying of Azar" describes Cromwell's method of doing justice in this grossly wicked matter, and we are mistaken if it does not make the reader shudder. The story tells of the crushing down and the shearing in twain and the lopping off in pieces of the King's men by the Cromwellians at Marston Moor and Naseby. There is plenty to keep the reader's interest very much alive.

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floors a gigantic lumberman, he foils the attempts on his life of a wicked foreman, he protects an Indian maiden, he drowns the demon rum, he punishes his enemy, he becomes a master of his business and he wins the girl he loves. Every chapter is reminiscent of the stage, but is effective.

SHORT STORIES.

In "Off Sandy Hook" (Frederick A. Stokes Company) the lady who now uses the pen name Richard Dehan has gathered together twenty-six of her short stories, nearly all humorous. They preserve a pretty high average, as all her work does; they are bright and amusing and fulfill their purpose of entertaining.

Pretty realistic sketches of British army life, some of them dealing with conditions in the present war, will be found in "The Soldier's Story" (Appleton). The hero is a product of the Glasgow slums, who is put through the routine of army training in the successive tales, gets into all possible trouble and fights like a hero. The alcoholic and pugilistic sides of army life are exaggerated in these tales and the humor tends to practical jokes, but the tales are interesting.

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Mr. Brangwyn's pictures: it is also a beautiful specimen of typographic art.

The results of an archeological pilgrimage through Magna Graecia are offered in the forty lithographs contained in "Joseph Pennell's Pictures in the Land of Temples" (J. B. Lippincott Company), accompanied by the artist's record of his impressions and his comments on each picture. The journey began in Sicily at Taormina, next the artist lingered at Girgenti before crossing to the mainland to visit Paestum and then wandering to Athens and Hellas proper, where he made most of his drawings. It is a very interesting series of pictures that will be helpful to travelers who follow the author's route and to classical students.

For the stay at homes who must take their short holidays in the city books like Sarah Comstock's "Old Roads from the Heart of New York" (G. P. Putnam's Sons) will be welcome. Starting from the Battery the author strikes out thirty miles in every direction and points out the interesting sights on the way. She begins with Brooklyn and Long Island, then strikes into New Jersey, first south across the bay and then west beyond the Hudson and winds up with the exploration of the Bronx and Maryland. She properly acknowledges indebtedness to others for much of the

AMELIE RIVES ON QUESTION OF A WIFE'S RESPONSIBILITY

Amelie Rives (the Princess Troubatzky), who has contributed one of the most interesting novels to the fall list of books in "Share of Blame," has given her charming heroine rather a hard time of it in that her first husband is a slave of drugs and her second husband gives way to drink and some of the things that go with it. The heroine remains loyal to the first husband through harrowing ordeals until he finally dies; but the second husband is not so good. The heroine is a fine figure—not because of his infidelity but because he unjustly suspected her.

Princess Troubatzky's handling of the story suggested certain questions. The author has sincere convictions regarding these points which develop into the crises of her story. And though she is at present vacationing on her Virginia estate—vacationing by writing short stories and a play—the Princess Troubatzky has expressed her views on these points.

How far do you think a wife's responsibility reaches? she was asked.

"As I see it," replied the Princess, "a wife's responsibility reaches as far as it can go without excluding self-protection and without becoming transformed into a servile and useless acquiescence. In other words, I cannot see that a fine, strong, useful being should sacrifice herself to a weak, ignoble and worthless character."

"As long as she sees a reasonable hope of helping her husband to overcome his evil ways she should stand by him," the delicate slipper cases where she wears some interesting and significant facts and figures in regard to the popularity of this author's other books, especially her first novel, "Freelance," which they point out, shows something as to the way a good book lives.

According to this statement there have been 119,000 copies of "Freelance" in England and sold in this country alone 75,562 copies of "Freelance."

In England a popular edition has recently been published, and advance orders for 75,562 copies of this book, which is eight years old, were taken on publication. A short time after publication.

matter contained in the book, but the manner in which she has arranged it makes it very serviceable. There are many illustrations and a useful map.

In the articles describing Australia and adjacent tropical lands, collected under the title "Australian Byways" (Harpers), Norman Duncan, we fear, has missed a great opportunity. He has gone somewhat out of his way in search of the picturesque and describes entertainingly the traditional Australia that Englishmen and Americans have been brought up to believe in. Of the land that is developing a literature of its own, which is forcing itself on our notice that is making experiments in politics and in civilization that are being watched with interest and even imitation, there is no hint. It is the remnants of the Australia of fiction that Mr. Duncan has hunted up, and wherever he could the strange doings of savages, and this he serves up acceptably.

Another classic of exploration, Dr. Elsie Kent Kane's account of the search for Sir John Franklin's expedition, has been added to the "Outing Adventure Library" under the title "Adrift in the Arctic Ice Pack" (Outing Publishing Company). It has been abridged judiciously, leaving in the most interesting portions of the original narrative, and in this form is a story that will stir readers, young and old.

SOME FACTS ABOUT SOME POPULAR NOVELS

In connection with their announcement of the publication of "Michael O'Halloran" Gene Stratton-Porter's novel, Doubleday, Page & Co. have issued some interesting and significant facts and figures in regard to the popularity of this author's other books, especially her first novel, "Freelance," which they point out, shows something as to the way a good book lives.

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Penelope's Postscripts
By Kate Douglas Wiggin
"Just as vivacious and readable as the former books and just as full of Penelope's unexpectedness of word and deed."—N. Y. Times. Frontispiece, \$1.00 net.

Little Miss Grouch
By Samuel Hopkins Adams
"As bright a bit of fun as we have come across in a long time."—N. Y. Sun. Illustrated by R. M. Crosby. \$1.00 net.

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vation the English publisher, Mr. John Murray, wrote from London that about 119,000 copies of the cheap edition of "Freelance" had been sold. Assuming that five persons read each book, which the authorities say is a low average, this indicates that more than four million people have enjoyed the adventures of the new famous "Freelance," to say nothing of the other books; and although we are speaking of fiction, it should not be forgotten that Mrs. Porter's nature books, "Moths of the Lumber," "Stalks of the Wild," "What I Have Done With Birds," etc., are at the head of their class and are used constantly by those who know most on these subjects.

Before bringing out a cheap edition of "Freelance" in England, Mr. Murray brought out a regular standard edition which sold in large quantities, and it is indicated that more than four million people have enjoyed the adventures of the new famous "Freelance," to say nothing of the other books; and although we are speaking of fiction, it should not be forgotten that Mrs. Porter's nature books, "Moths of the Lumber," "Stalks of the Wild," "What I Have Done With Birds," etc., are at the head of their class and are used constantly by those who know most on these subjects.

All this in spite of the great war in Europe, which has absorbed the attention of the English people to the exclusion of nearly all else. The fact remains, however, that 119,000 copies of "Freelance" have been sold in the British Isles since the outbreak of the war.

New Books Too Good to Miss

Penelope's Postscripts
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